

NUTRITION SERVICES DIVISION MANAGEMENT BULLETIN

No.: 00-400

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| TO: | All Food Distribution Agencies | ISSUE DATE: January 2000 |
| FROM: | Commodity Distribution Unit, Food Distribution Program | |
| ATTENTION: | Food Service Directors | |
| SUBJECT: | United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Commodity Complaint Hotline | |
| REFERENCE: | Management Bulletin 96-400 | |

This management bulletin transmits information regarding how to file a complaint about a particular USDA product.

To file a complaint, you may call the USDA's Commodity Complaint Hotline, or you may fax the information directly to USDA at:

Toll Free: 1-800-446-6991 (Monday - Friday, 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. EST)
TTY: Use the Relay Service in Your State
FAX: (703) 305-2420

If a call is made to the hotline when the USDA office is closed, callers should leave a message on the hotline voice mail system. In such cases, USDA staff will return the call the following business day. If the national office is closed and you have an emergency food problem or potential health hazard, please leave a message on the hotline voicemail and contact the **California Food Distribution Program Section at (916) 323-0865**, the **FNS Regional Office at (415) 705-2229** and/or your local health department, as appropriate.

BACKGROUND

The hotline was established as a pilot program in 1996 to simplify the commodity complaint system and make it more customer oriented. The hotline handles food quality complaints such as contamination, infestation, foreign matter/objects, or crushed/leaking cans. These problems result in unwholesome food and require decisions and immediate action by USDA.

When calling or faxing the hotline, it is helpful to have the following information available to process the complaint quickly and efficiently:

- The name of the product and the USDA Commodity Code, if known;
- The nature of the problem and whether anyone reported feeling sick from consuming the product;

- The extent of the problem (e.g., number of cases, pounds, or truckloads);
- The specific circumstances involved;
- Each location where the product is being stored; and
- Delivery order information including date received, contract number, notice of delivery date, lot number, and can codes.

For further information about the Commodity Complaint Hotline, you may visit the USDA Food Distribution website at www.fns.usda.gov/fdd/MENU/FAQ/hotline.htm.

If you have any questions regarding this management bulletin, please contact Amy Bell, R.D., Child Nutrition Consultant, Commodity Distribution Unit, at (916) 322-5051, (800) 952-5609, or by e-mail at abell@cde.ca.gov.

Marilyn Briggs, Director
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The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the California Department of Education's Nutrition Services Division (NSD) prohibit discrimination in all their programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, or disability.

To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 14th and Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410 or call (202) 720-5964 (voice and TDD). USDA and NSD are equal opportunity providers and employers.